

a split sleeve (31) formed by at least two segments and having a first end portion (34) adjacent the transfer region (15) and a second end portion (35) remote from the transfer region (15);

at least one resilient element (36) arranged on the second end portion (35) of the split sleeve (31) to compliantly retain the two segments of the split sleeve (31) in assembly;

the cross section of the split sleeve (31) tapering conically substantially and inwardly from the first end portion (34) to the second end portion (35); and

at least portions of the two segments of the split sleeve (31) being expandable from each other against the action of the at least one resilient element (36).

25. The conveyor according to claim 24, characterized in that the transfer arrangement (8) comprises:

at least one catch element (18) located adjacent an extended length of the head guiding duct (13);

a portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) being extendable into the head guiding duct (13);

means for developing an urging force to maintain the portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) normally within the head guiding duct (13); and

the portion (21) of the at least one catch element (18) being composed of a material which allows the portion (21) to be deflected from the head guiding duct (13) against the urging force.

26. The conveyor according to claims 22, 23 or 25, characterized in that the material is a resilient material.

REMARKS

A petition is being filed on even date herewith to request that the period for response to the above-noted Office action be extended by two months, to November 21, 2000.

An information disclosure statement is being filed on even date herewith.

In this response, applicants have cancelled claims 3, 4, 5 and 6, and have added claims 15 through 26. Claims 1, 2 and 7 through 14 have been amended and remain as active claims in this application.

Further, the specification has been amended to describe features shown clearly in the drawings, as originally filed. Also, copies of selected sheets of the drawings are attached hereto to show, in red, numerals which applicants propose to add to Figs. 3 and 4 in support of the above-noted changes to the specification. The amendments to the specification, and the proposed changes to the drawings, support amendments to claim 1, and features of new claim 15.

Applicants submit that the subject matter relating to the changes to the specification, and the addition of numerals in Figs. 3 and 4, is clearly shown in the drawings as originally filed and, therefore, does not constitute new matter.

Claims 4 through 14 have been objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot serve as a basis for any other multiple dependent claim.

In response to the Examiner's objection, applicants have rewritten, amended or cancelled various claims, and has taken care in the writing of the newly added claims, to insure that no multiple dependent claim forms the basis for any other multiple dependent claim in this application.

In view of the above-noted actions, applicants request that the objection to claims 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2 and 3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

In response to the § 112 rejection, applicants have rewritten claim 1, and amended claim 2. Claim 3 has been cancelled.

Further, the Examiner has questioned the use of the word "articulated" in claim 3. Applicants have cancelled claim 3 for other reasons, which renders the issue relating to the word "articulated" moot.

With the rewriting of claim 1 and the amendments to claim 2, applicants submit that claims 1 and 2 satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. and hereby request that the rejection of the claims under § 112 be removed.

Claims 1, 2 and 3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,476,204 (hereinafter "the Eisenpresser patent").

Claim 3 has been cancelled. Applicants set forth in rewritten claim 1, and in dependent claim 2, a conveyor for components (12) having a head (41) and a shank (42). The conveyor includes at least one catch element (18) having a first end portion (21) and a second end portion (46) spaced from the first end portion, which is mounted for movement. The at least one catch element (18) extends along, and is adjacent, a head guiding duct (13) in a prescribed direction of feeding of the components (12). A biasing element (39) is positioned to urge the first end portion (21) into the head guiding duct (13).

In the Eisenpresser patent, a stud 10 is fed down an inclined ramp member 16, and onto a pivotal stud support 18 at a preassembly station directly beneath a driving member 32. A stud placement member 22 is biasingly positioned for placement of the stud 10 in the preassembly station, and is located on a side of the preassembly station which is opposite the side of the preassembly station at which the ramp member is located and **terminates**.

There is no teaching in the Eisenpresser patent of at least one catch element in the context of applicants' claims 1 and 2. For example, in applicants' claims, the catch element (18) extends along, and is adjacent, the head guiding duct (13), where a first end portion (21) is urged **into** the head guiding duct (13) by a biasing element (39).

The inclined ramp member 16 of the Eisenpresser patent is a hollow channel which guides the stud 10 to the preassembly station. There is no structure adjacent or extending along the inclined ramp member 16 of the Eisenpresser patent, nor is there any structure which **is urged into** the hollow chamber of the ramp member. The

stud placement member 22 does not extend along, and is not adjacent, the ramp member 16 and does not have any portion thereof which is urged into the ramp member.

Applicants set forth in claim 2 that the at least one catch element 18 is formed with a lock face 22 which at least partially limits the transfer region 15. There is no structure in the Eisenpresser patent which teaches a lock face formed on a catch element which is urged into the ramp member.

Therefore, for the reasons expressed above, applicants submit that their claims 1 and 2 clearly distinguish over any teaching of the Eisenpresser patent, and hereby request the withdrawal of the rejection of these claims based on the Eisenpresser patent.

Claims 1, 2 and 3 are further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,813,114 (hereinafter "the Blacket patent").

As noted above, claim 3 has been cancelled.

The Blacket patent shows a leaf spring 229 having a cantilevered end portion which extends into a supply passage 220, in the path of a rivet 217 fed through the supply passage. The remaining portion of the leaf spring 229 appears to be imbedded, or fixedly mounted, in a punch guide housing. As the rivet 217 is moved past the cantilevered end portion of the leaf spring 229, the end portion is deflected out of the passage 220 to allow the rivet to move into a delivery passage 212. After the rivet 217 moves past the deflected end portion of the leaf spring 229, the end portion returns to its position within the supply passage 220, and also prevents the rivet from returning to the passage. A punch 216 is activated to push the rivet 217 through the delivery passage 212, and ultimately into assembly with a workpiece.

Applicants' set forth in claim 1, and in dependent claim 2, a catch element (18) which has spaced end portions (21, 48), and is mounted for movement. The catch element (18) extends along and adjacent a head guiding duct (13) generally in the direction of the feeding of the components (12). A biasing element (39) is

positioned to urge the first end portion (21) into a head guiding duct (13).

The Blacket patent does not teach a catch element mounted for movement adjacent to a head guiding duct, with a biasing element for urging an end portion of the catch element into a head guiding duct.

For these reasons, applicants submit that their claims 1 and 2 clearly distinguish over any teaching of the Blacket patent, and hereby request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 on the basis of the Blacket patent.

Applicants have rewritten or amended original claims 7 through 14 to clearly define their invention. Also, applicants have added new claims 15 through 26 to further define their invention.

Applicants submit that, for the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 2 and 7 through 26 patentably distinguish over any teachings or suggestions of the Eisenpresser patent and/or the Blacket patent, and hereby request allowance of these claims.

Applicants submit that the references cited by the Examiner, but not applied, are also distinguished over for the foregoing reasons.

Applicants submit further that this application is in condition for allowance and such allowance is hereby solicited.

If the Examiner wishes to discuss any aspects of this response, or any other aspects of this application, the Examiner should call applicant's representative, J. Bruce Hoofnagle, at (410) 442-2417.

Respectfully submitted,

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